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MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

THESIS

**POLAND AND THE EUROPEAN UNION'S
SECURITY AND DEFENSE POLICY**

by

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June 2004

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**POLAND AND THE EUROPEAN UNION'S
SECURITY AND DEFENSE POLICY**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
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This thesis analyzes key factors in Poland's decision-making concerning the European Union's European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP). It reviews the development of Polish policy concerning the ESDP and the main considerations that have guided Polish assessments in this regard. Poland's position as a member of NATO and as a candidate for membership in the European Union and other factors affecting perceptions of the ESDP in Poland are discussed to throw light on the controversy associated with Poland's participation in the ESDP and to clarify possible implications for the future. With Poland's admission to the EU in May 2004, Warsaw will have an opportunity to contribute to ESDP formation and implementation. However, Poland will probably remain committed to maintaining NATO's primacy and cautious regarding concepts of transforming the EU into an autonomous military power, especially with respect to collective defense.

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The purpose of this thesis is to analyze key factors in Poland's decision-making concerning the European Union's European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP). The thesis reviews the emergence of the EU's ESDP and Polish involvement in these events. The thesis examines the main considerations that guided Poland in assessing the European Union's emerging security and defense dimension.

This topic is important for three reasons. First, Poland's stand regarding the EU's European Security and Defense Policy is a test of the country's readiness to participate in the process of European integration. Second, in contrast with the discussions in the 1990s, today's debate on the construction of the European Union's defense capabilities covers more than the theory. This construction is one of the most dynamic processes in the European integration movement. In this sense, Poland's decision to become a member of the EU has a political meaning and provides a signal to the rest of the candidates in terms of its future behavior. Third, the process of forming the European Union's military capabilities, particularly the formulation in December 1999 of the Headline Goal, is closely connected with ongoing processes in NATO concerning narrowing the gap between United States and European military capabilities. Therefore, Poland as a member of NATO is not only interested in such plans being fulfilled but is also actively involved in this process.

B. MAJOR QUESTIONS AND ARGUMENT

This thesis investigates the causes of political controversy over Poland's participation in the European Security and Defense Policy. In addition, this thesis considers the possibility that the European Security and Defense Policy may be the first step towards making the European Union's defense independent of NATO influence. This implies that the EU might become a collective defense organization. Poland's participation in the ESDP does not fully reflect its national interests concerning Euro-Atlantic cooperation. Poland as a NATO member perceives the ESDP as a threat to Euro-

Atlantic relations. To accomplish this task – that is, gaining a better understanding of the controversy associated with Poland's participation in the ESDP - three fundamental questions need to be addressed. First, what is the position of Poland as a member of NATO towards the ESDP? In other words, since the country is already fully engaged in Euro-Atlantic security as a NATO member, what motivates Poland to take part in the ESDP? Second, knowing that Poland will join the EU in May 2004, what has been Poland's position as a candidate for membership in the European Union towards the ESDP? Lastly, and most importantly, what are the elements affecting the perception of the ESDP in Poland?

C. BACKGROUND

Analyzing Poland's position concerning the European Union's European Security and Defense Policy to determine the essence of the problem is difficult. If EU diplomats quoted by the press and the comments and statements by western European experts are to be believed, Polish politicians have treated the process of establishing an EU security and defense dimension with considerable distrust, perceiving it as a threat to Euro-Atlantic relations. Furthermore, since Poland desires to become an EU member quickly, its doubts about the ESDP have not been openly expressed. Polish leaders, therefore, treat the relevant European Union plans as unavoidable.

Polish diplomats and politicians argue that their reactions are not a result of their dislike of the concept as such but merely of the manner in which the EU has decided to establish the new European Security and Defense Policy bodies and mechanisms. In the Poles' opinion, the conduct of the members of the European Union has been jeopardizing the structure of Euro-Atlantic security, thus possibly leading to a situation in which NATO and the EU, instead of cooperating, would compete with each other. The numerous uncertainties and doubts of the Poles focus on two issues: the inappropriate manner of building relations between NATO and the EU, and the failure of the European Union's policy to give enough attention to the views of the six non-EU European members of NATO (the Czech Republic, Hungary, Iceland, Norway, Poland, and Turkey).

Meanwhile, the Poles have found the ESDP from the very beginning frightening. At the beginning, the EU was unable to propose detailed solutions regarding NATO-EU relations because the ESDP was in the process of being developed and the European Union members themselves had to rethink many issues. Besides that, the EU by nature is an institution closed to non-members. To the charges of blocking access to European Union documents and of disregarding Poland's need to consult about ESDP matters, the EU responded that Poland has not properly employed informal information channels.

As the positions of Poland and the EU have evolved, the views of the two parties have moved closer together. Polish views have been reflected in the relevant conclusions of successive European Council meetings. Polish diplomats openly recognize that following the European Council meetings at Feira and Nice, the majority of the policies favored by Warsaw related to the specific role of the six non-EU European members of NATO and to the EU's relations with NATO were included in the Presidency Conclusions.

Nevertheless, in thinking about the European Union's security and defense policy the Poles are still apprehensive that:

EU countries may not fulfill their commitments concerning the acquisition of the Headline Goal capabilities while the already existing ESDP bodies may make cooperation with the Alliance more difficult;

The European Union's security and defense policy may give rise to operations without paying enough attention to the US position and, at the same time, allow Russia to exert greater influence on security affairs in Europe.

D. METHODOLOGY AND SOURCES

This thesis analyzes Polish debates about the European Union's ESDP since 1999 and the current Polish policy concerning the ESDP. The thesis is primarily based on official Polish and European Union sources, including declarations, speeches and documents related to the development and problems of the European Union's security and defense policy. The secondary sources include scholarly analyses, press articles and interviews.

This thesis is limited to certain aspects of the European Union's security and defense policy. The legal and institutional questions are reduced to the necessary minimum; and a number of detailed problems, which have important political implications, have not been accounted for or have only been mentioned briefly in this thesis.

E. CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER SUMMARY

The thesis is organized as follows. Chapter II examines the position of Poland as a member of NATO regarding the EU's ESDP. This includes the evolution of Poland's position concerning its national interests and security issues before and after joining NATO as well as particular positions towards the ESDP. Chapter III provides an analysis of Poland's position as a candidate for membership in the European Union regarding the ESDP. The chapter includes the Polish viewpoint on defense and security concerns in Europe as well as factors that have led to enhanced cooperation between Poland and the European Union in anticipation of Poland's membership in May 2004. Finally, this chapter analyzes the preferred Polish vision for the EU's future security role: as a stabilizing factor in Europe rather than a superpower or counterbalance to the United States. Chapter IV offers an analysis of elements affecting the perception of the EU's ESDP in Poland, including lack of confidence in the European Union, and perceptions of possible threats to international security. The final chapter offers recommendations about developing the ESDP in a manner consistent with Polish security interests. This chapter also provides a summary of the key findings. It analyses the prospects for Poland's future involvement in ESDP crisis management.

F. OUTLINE

Chapter I: Introduction

- A. Statement of purpose
- B. Major questions and argument
- C. Background
- D. Methodology and sources
- E. Chapter-by-chapter summary
- F. Outline

Chapter II: ESDP and Poland as a member of NATO

- A. Evolution of Poland's position towards the ESDP
- B. Current Polish policy

Chapter III: ESDP and Poland as a candidate for membership in the European Union

- A. Polish points of view
- B. Enhanced cooperation
- C. Europe: Superpower or "Stabilizing Factor"

Chapter IV: Elements affecting perceptions of the ESDP in Poland

- A. Lack of confidence in the European Union
- B. Perception of International Security
- C. Russian and French policies

Chapter V: Conclusions

- A. Implications for the future

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II. ESDP AND POLAND AS A MEMBER OF NATO

A. EVOLUTION OF POLAND'S POSITION TOWARDS THE ESDP

Polish politicians expected that the Helsinki European Council in December 1999 would produce precise answers to the questions raised at the Cologne European Council in June the same year, when the European Union decided to develop and strengthen its collective security and defense policy. However, the Helsinki summit not only did not reach the expected decisions but even caused concerns with regard to the direction the EU's ESDP concept could follow.¹

The Presidency Progress Report to the Helsinki European Council on strengthening the Common European Policy on Security and Defense declared that:

The European Union should have the autonomous capacity to take decisions and, where NATO as a whole is not engaged, to launch and then to conduct EU-led military operations in response to international crises in support of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP)... Upon a decision by the Council to launch an operation, the non-EU European NATO members will participate if they so wish, in the event of an operation requiring recourse to NATO assets and capabilities. They will, on a decision by the Council, be invited to take part in operations where the EU does not use NATO assets... Russia, Ukraine and other European States engaged in political dialogue with the Union and other interested States may be invited to take part in the EU-led operations.²

In Poland's opinion the wording of the Presidency Report was too vague and placed NATO's European allies on an equal level with the EU's other partners, the European Union membership candidate countries plus Russia and Ukraine. The Presidency Report did not specify the framework and extent of the EU-NATO cooperation as well as its regularity and contents. Warsaw found the Presidency Report's

¹ O.Osica, *Wspólna europejska polityka bezpieczeństwa i obrony w perspektywie Polski*, Centrum Stosunków Międzynarodowych, Warszawa 2001, p. 18.

² *Presidency Progress Report to the Helsinki European Council on Strengthening the Common European Policy on Security and Defense*, <http://ue.eu.int/en/Info/eurocouncil/index.htm>

statement concerning the possible participation of the non-EU European members of NATO in EU-led military operations with the use of NATO assets insufficient, because the report failed to clarify how in practice such participation would work. Moreover, Polish leaders noted that the declarations concerning cooperation between NATO and the EU's newly established temporary bodies for the ESDP as well as concerning defense planning by both organizations and the status of rapid reaction forces, which had to be established by 2003, were as uncertain and unclear.³

Owing to several disputes generated by media reports on the establishment within the EU of a “duplicate” of NATO, the political atmosphere between the Cologne and Helsinki summits had a huge influence on Polish attitudes concerning the EU's ESDP. Although Polish Defense Minister Janusz Onyszkiewicz did not conceal his concerns about the “lack of clarity” in the EU plans, he emphasized that “life itself” and “financial realities” would impose solutions “close to our expectations.”⁴ Likewise, the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Bronislaw Geremek, argued that the Helsinki Presidency Report concerning the EU's ESDP did not convince him. However, he stressed, Poland had achieved at least the success that no one had attacked its position on the Helsinki Presidency Report.⁵ This experience was even more painful because Polish diplomats remembered how “at the time when Poland was driving towards NATO membership, we felt that we were treated by the Americans and by the military diplomacy of NATO countries with sympathy and respect.”⁶ In contrast, in the EU framework Polish diplomats not only felt that they were being ignored, but they also could hear the opinion expressed that if Poland did not want to participate in the proposed initiatives, at least it “should not disturb” them.⁷

Several days after the Helsinki summit, at the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Brussels, Polish Foreign Minister Bronislaw Geremek, in his speech

³ PAP serwis dotyczacy Wojska Polskiego, 16 grudnia 1999, <http://www.pap.com.pl>

⁴ Report following The North Atlantic Council in Defense Ministers session held in Brussels, 2-3 December 1999, <http://www.pap.com.pl>

⁵ J. Pawlicki, *Korpus bedzie, szczegoly potem*, Gazeta Wyborcza, 16 December 1999, p.8.

⁶ B. Geremek, *Jestesmy czescia Zachodu*, Gazeta Wyborcza, 5-6 May 2000, p.14.

⁷ R. Kuzniar, *Nadmiar wizji, brak konkretow*, Tygodnik Powszechny, No. 41/2000, p.3.

concerning the EU's ESDP, was explicit. While assuring his audience about Poland's general support for the EU Helsinki decisions, he did not conceal his concerns about the implications for the future of NATO. He argued that "Security (hard and soft) comes first for us in Poland. We cannot afford for NATO to lose its vitality. In an era of experimentation let's not forget the lasting value of trans-Atlantic integration. In this context we consider the EU *Presidency's Report on Strengthening the Common European Policy on Security and Defense* a tangible outcome of the discussion, which has progressed much since the Cologne European Council. It confirms the commitment and determination on the part of the EU Member States to strengthen in particular European practical capabilities for crisis management as the adoption of the European Headline Goal proves. Thus we perceive it also as providing a significant reinforcement of our Alliance as well as our share of burden in the transatlantic link that, while rebalanced, remains vital for the security of our continent. When pursuing the process we should not spend too much time discussing about the architecture but rather about capabilities coupled with adaptability and mobility."⁸ In Geremek's opinion, the EU's ESDP as well as NATO play crucial roles in Europe. "This new dimension of Europe must however, evolve from the security requirements of the new Europe and not only by conscious and institutional design."⁹ The Polish foreign minister also advised against the creation in Europe of inner and external circles based on the new mechanisms. He proposed that relations between the EU and the six non-EU European members of NATO be based on the WEU mechanisms.¹⁰

In May 2000 Geremek developed these views in presenting the basic directions of Polish foreign policy to the Polish Parliament. The Polish foreign minister noted that Poland welcomed the EU initiative concerning the strengthening of the CFSP through the development of the ESDP. "We submitted our opinion on the ESDP to the EU summit in Helsinki and expressed our readiness to fully participate in the shaping of European

⁸ B. Geremek, *On European Security and Defense Policy*, North Atlantic Council, Brussels, 15 December 1999, www.polonya.org.tr/sec5-ue-nato-esdi-pl-position.htm

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ O. Osica, *op.cit.*, p. 19.

political and defense capabilities to make it possible to conduct operations in crisis situations, and we voiced our expectations both as a NATO member state and, in the near future, a full EU member.” However, he added,

We support the EU decisions on the assumption that all the solutions proposed aim at bolstering and harmonizing EU and NATO functionality as well as strengthening the European security pillar, the trans-Atlantic bonds, and the US commitment to European security. Our practical aim is to create conditions allowing the EU to undertake military action and operations in specific situations requiring action short of involvement of NATO as a whole. Having this in mind, we are determined to promote maximum harmony and institutional coherence in EU-NATO cooperation. We want to establish for ourselves particular conditions relating to our participation in the EU structures responsible for the ESDP, which should take into consideration our NATO membership. We will also be striving for the maintenance at the highest possible level of cohesion between the NATO Defense Capabilities Initiative and the European Headline Goals proposed for implementation within the framework of the EU.¹¹

He also argued that such capability improvement processes should be pursued without an atmosphere of competition that could undermine NATO and the EU.¹²

Nevertheless, an atmosphere of competition prevailed during the spring of 2000, convincing politicians in Poland that the concept of the EU’s ESDP involved jeopardy and that this concept, contrary to the official declarations, aimed not at strengthening Euro-Atlantic ties but rather weakening them. The main factor responsible for this situation remained the method of dialogue with NATO adopted by a group of EU states, particularly France. This method was based on the assumption that first the EU member states had to decide about their goals concerning ESDP, create decision-making mechanisms and other appropriate bodies, and only then and only on that basis pursue talks with the Alliance or simply inform its members about the EU’s established position. Therefore, the EU refused to convene regular meetings or to provide access to all

¹¹ B.Geremek, *Oswiadczenie Ministra Spraw Zagranicznych dotyczace kierunkow polskiej polityki zagranicznej wygloszone w Sejmie RP*, 9 maj 2000, www.sejm.gov.pl

¹² *Ibid.*

documents for the non-EU European members of NATO, offering instead informal consultations and meetings.¹³

To some extent the impasse was broken in June 2000. The European Council at Feira decided to establish four working groups to define relations between NATO and the EU's ESDP and the rules according to which the EU could have access to Alliance assets. The efforts made by these groups helped to solve many problems. However, as Polish diplomats emphasized, in practical cooperation between NATO and EU planners, complications persist regarding details that remain unexplained.¹⁴

The improvement in the atmosphere of EU-NATO relations has had a positive impact on Poland's position concerning the EU's ESDP. In June 2000 the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs sent the EU member states a document entitled "Proposals for Practical Development of the Feira Decisions Concerning EU Cooperation with Non-EU European Allies." It contained the Polish interpretation of the rules concerning the EU's future cooperation with non-EU European members of NATO as established by the Portuguese Presidency which ended in June 2000. This document also submitted the postulates concerning such cooperation addressed to the next EU Presidency, that of France. A comparison of this document and the Presidency report regarding the EU's ESDP accepted in Nice in December 2000 shows that both parties achieved their basic goals.¹⁵ However, this did not mean that everything became clear concerning cooperation between NATO and the EU.

In a speech at Warsaw University in May 2001, the Polish foreign minister, Wladyslaw Bartoszewski, observed that "the principles implemented by the EU applying to its relations with third countries, particularly with the NATO members aspiring to membership in the EU, in point of fact do not allow for a possibility of cooperation with regard to the ESDP. Consultations or dialogue will not replace regular cooperation."¹⁶

¹³ O. Osica, *op.cit.*, s. 20.

¹⁴ *Op.cit.*, s.21.

¹⁵ The Presidency's report was accepted at the meeting of the General Affairs Council in 4 December 2000, <http://ue.eu.int>

¹⁶ W. Bartoszewski, *Europejska polityka bezpieczeństwa – polski punkt widzenia*, speech at Warsaw University, 11 May 2001, www.msz.gov.pl

The Polish foreign minister mentioned also a number of specific questions to which, in his opinion, no clear answers had been given as yet:

- a. How would the EU strategic concept be defined?
- b. Where, in the geographical sense, was the EU going to use its forces and in what specific circumstances?
- c. How would the EU's military operations be carried out?
- d. What should be the extent of planning and military training?
- e. How in practice would decision-making proceed with regard to specific crisis management operations?¹⁷

Nevertheless, taking into consideration the well judged wording of the minister's entire statement as well as that of the document prepared by the ministry in the part concerning the EU's ESDP, it is clear that at that time the developing concept of ESDP did not cause much confrontation. This was partly a result of the shift of focus to a number of technical questions. Another factor was the suspension of progress on the modalities of EU-NATO relations as a result of Turkish objections.¹⁸ Uncertainties about the position of the new US Administration with regard to the EU's ESDP concept also had to be resolved.¹⁹

Why did Polish politicians pay so much attention to the issue of participation by the six non-EU European members of NATO in the EU's ESDP, even though Poland would soon itself be an EU member? In other words, were purposeful considerations involved in Poland's cooperation with the five non-EU European NATO allies? For instance, did Warsaw intend to increase pressure on the EU to give more attention to the Polish position, or to all non-EU NATO allies, including at some point the United States?

Undoubtedly, from the Polish point of view, the creation of a common forum with the Czech Republic and Hungary for discussion and pressure on the EU would improve the position of these countries. This in turn could be important in a situation in which

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Turkey demanded for its representative a permanent position within the bodies responsible for the EU's ESDP. This in turn was the condition for Turkey's permission to allow the EU access to the Alliance's defense planning. This in turn was one of the principles by which NATO countries had agreed to support EU operations using NATO assets, O. Osica, *op.cit.*, s. 20.

¹⁹ *Op. cit.*, s. 22.

enlargement took place after the EU's ESDP had proved to be effective.²⁰ Consequently, the creation of a special, favored status for non-EU European members of NATO could be regarded as an investment in the future. Therefore, a group of nations sharing similar views on international security might be able to protect transatlantic ties by influencing the EU's decisions about autonomous operations and about operations conducted in cooperation with NATO. Even if the status of the European NATO allies that are not members of the EU does not give them a right of veto, it guarantees them a right of consultations. In practice it may in some circumstances constitute an effective instrument of pressure. The effectiveness of this instrument may increase when the security concerns of both organizations focus on certain geographical directions - for instance, toward Russia.²¹

However, the cooperation undertaken together with the Czechs and the Hungarians as fellow aspirants to EU membership did not produce any positive results because neither in the Czech Republic nor in Hungary did the development of the EU's ESDP give rise to as much concern as it did in Poland. Moreover, these two southern neighbors of Poland were interested in preventing the disputes about their status within the ESDP framework from having an adverse effect on their relations with the EU and on the negotiations concerning their prospective EU membership.²²

In addition to the six non-EU European members of NATO, Poland had at its disposal another instrument which could serve as an influence on the ESDP's development, the Weimar Triangle. From the moment it was established in 1994, it was regarded by its founders – Berlin, Paris, and Warsaw - as a most important and useful round-table for political cooperation concerning European security. For Polish politicians it would seem that this forum appeared to be not only the most effective approach, but also one that might have emphasized the politically unique position and role of Poland in European security.²³ However, in the event the Weimar Triangle proved to be of no

²⁰ *Op. cit.*, s. 23.

²¹ *Polska Zbrojna*, 20 May 2001, p. 12.

²² O. Osica, *op. cit.*, s. 24.

²³ F. Draus, *Trojkat Wajmarski – w poszukiwaniu sensu*, Przegląd Środkowo Europejski, <http://www.medianet.pl/~ceurorev/numer21/08.htm>

use.²⁴ Polish diplomats maintained that their attempts to use the Weimar Triangle to deal with the most important Polish concerns about the EU's ESDP failed, first and foremost, due to France's policy. During the bilateral talks with the Germans it was possible to reach a conclusion with regard to the defense planning questions. However, during the trilateral deliberations, Germany withdrew to the French position and refused to discuss the ESDP issues in the Weimar forum. Polish-French relations had been deteriorating since the Helsinki summit, partly as a consequence of differing priorities. Both countries were attempting to be the guardians of greater values, the French of their conception of European values and the Poles of trans-Atlantic values.²⁵

In the sphere of security most Polish politicians remained strongly supportive of the Atlantic Alliance in their reasoning. A partial explanation of this support was that Poland's political class tends to focus on collective defense guarantees. In Poland there is great enthusiasm for NATO, which is natural for a new member that has just realized its aspirations. Moreover, a lack of understanding as to the goals and future role of the EU's ESDP led many Polish politicians and military authorities to doubt the utility of this concept. Therefore, the Polish debate concerning the EU's ESDP did not fully address the future role of the EU on the international stage or the geographical scope of its policies.²⁶

B. CURRENT POLISH POLICY

In 2000, Henryk Szlajfer, the long-time Director of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Department for Policy Planning, mentioned three elements that, in his opinion, affected Poland's attitude to the European Union's European Security and Defense Policy:

- Poland's membership in NATO,
- Poland's associate membership in the Western European Union, and
- Poland's aspiration to be a member of the EU.²⁷

²⁴ Speech given by the head of the National Security Bureau Marek Siwiec, National Security Bureau Meeting, 22 February 2001, www.bbn.pl

²⁵ F. Draus, *op.cit.*

²⁶ R. Trzaskowski, *From Candidate to Member State: Poland and the Future of the EU*, Occasional Papers, No. 37, EU ISS, September 2002, www.iss-eu.org

²⁷ H. Szlajfer, *Kształtowanie europejskiej polityki bezpieczeństwa i obrony: polska perspektywa*, Rocznik Strategiczny, 1999/2000, p.33-34.

Consequently, the official position of Poland as a member of NATO is consistent with that of the Alliance and comprises the conclusions of the April 1999 Washington Summit concerning the principles of NATO support for the EU's defense and security policy. These principles take into consideration three types of future military operations involving members of the EU: NATO operations, autonomous EU missions, and EU operations with potential NATO support.²⁸

Poland's position also takes account of the principles that the American Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, formulated in response to the Franco-British St. Malo initiative in December 1998, the so-called three Ds (no decoupling, no duplication, and no discrimination).

As Europeans look at the best way to organise their foreign and security policy cooperation, the key is to make sure that any institutional change is consistent with basic principles that have served the Atlantic partnership well for 50 years. This means avoiding what I would call the Three Ds: decoupling, duplication, and discrimination.

First, we want to avoid decoupling: NATO is the expression of the indispensable transatlantic link. It should remain an organisation of sovereign allies, where European decision-making is not unhooked from broader alliance decision-making.

Second, we want to avoid duplication: defence resources are too scarce for allies to conduct force planning, operate command structures, and make procurement decisions twice - once at NATO and once more at the EU. And third, we want to avoid any discrimination against NATO members who are not EU members.

Poland assumes that the development of the European Union's capabilities to carry out the Petersberg Tasks and potentially other missions is in the interest of both the EU and NATO, and that such development will favor a general enhancement of security in Europe. Moreover, the creation of EU crisis management capabilities in cooperation with NATO should strengthen transatlantic relations and thus the stability of the continent. For that reason, the elements describing the specific character of the Polish

²⁸ *The Reader's Guide to the NATO Summit in Washington, 23-25 April 1999*, p. 65.

position regarding the EU's ESDP are to be outlined not only in the postulates as such but also in the reasoning behind them.²⁹

Poland supports strong transatlantic ties based on the US commitment to European security. Similarly, the assessment of the desired direction of the EU's ESDP depends largely on whether it binds the United States to Europe or whether it contributes to the emergence of new problems between the United States and the European Union.³⁰

Another strongly emphasized postulate of Polish diplomacy holds that work on the EU's ESDP and proposed solutions should be adopted as a result of a transparent and open discussion in which all EU and NATO countries take part. Irrespective of the character of potential challenges, the cohesion and efficiency of the system of Euro-Atlantic security can be guaranteed only through a clear and efficient mechanism of EU-NATO cooperation in making appropriate decisions in specific crisis situations. Such a mechanism should apply to the EU's autonomous operations as well.³¹

The particular nature of the Polish position is also a result of Poland's status as an associate member of the Western European Union (WEU). The EU's European Security and Defense Policy concept presupposed that in certain circumstances non-EU European members of NATO might take part in the EU's decision shaping and defense planning. The preferences Poland expressed to the EU called for including the Czech Republic, Hungary, Iceland, Norway, Poland, and Turkey, as the six non-EU European members of NATO, in the framework of the EU Military Committee and Military Staff, with a possibility of full participation in the decision shaping process concerning the EU's political and strategic direction. Moreover, the forces declared by the six non-EU European members of NATO at the EU Capabilities Commitment Conference in Brussels in November 2000 should be included in the catalogue of forces to meet the European Union's December 1999 Headline Goal.³²

²⁹ W. Bartoszewski, *op. cit.*

³⁰ O. Osica, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

³¹ H. Szlajfer, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

³² O. Osica, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

From the Polish perspective, the objective was to create the EU's ESDP on the basis of principles derived from the traditions of the WEU, including the rights and obligations of the associate members. Based on this method, according to the official Polish interpretation, the EU would avoid discrimination against non-EU European members of NATO. The EU was supposed to refrain from such discrimination under the relevant conclusions of the NATO Washington Summit and with respect to the last of U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright's three Ds, namely no discrimination.³³

With regard to the existing policy, Poland acted on the assumption that NATO's European allies had unique contributions to make in future EU security and defense policy operations. That uniqueness was based not merely on their membership in the Alliance, but first and foremost on their geographical position which, especially in the cases of Poland, Turkey and Hungary, should not be ignored when planning EU operations in eastern and southeastern Europe. As Defense Minister Bronislaw Komorowski argued, "with regards to security matters, to maintain a largely artificial division between the EU and NATO is, in practice, a dangerous and also absurd idea as all countries will face the same problems."³⁴

Considering the objective and lasting military weakness that will probably burden the EU for at least another decade, the six non-EU European members of NATO might offer a valuable complement to the EU defense capabilities. Moreover, these countries have planned their defense within the framework of the Alliance and have gained experience in NATO operations; they are therefore fully able to cooperate in situations requiring a rapid response.

From a Polish point of view, the EU's ESDP must not be based on anti-American sentiments. This would be dangerous and could result in the destruction of transatlantic unity. The EU's ESDP may be useful for solving the burden-sharing problem in transatlantic relations, but it should never replace the NATO role in crisis management. In the words of Pawel Zurawski, a Polish expert on international security affairs, "The

³³ W. Bartoszewski, *op. cit.*

³⁴ The statement by Minister of National Defense Bronislaw Komorowski at the Capabilities Commitment Conference in Brussels, 21 November 2000, www.mon.gov.pl

EU can lead post-conflict stabilization missions, but without US logistical help and political leadership, European states will not be able to act in an ongoing conflict in the unpredictable future.”³⁵

In summary, Poland as a member of NATO and an associate member of the WEU assumed (a) that the EU should shape the ESDP in consultation with NATO and (b) that the decisions taken should ensure that cooperation between these two organizations would maintain harmony, both in peacetime as well as during military operations. This includes the need to maintain the cohesion of the two organizations’ defense planning, in particular contingency planning, and to define the geographic extent of future EU operations with regard to concrete situations in which the EU may choose to act.³⁶

As Polish diplomats maintain, the last postulate is significant because even a small conflict can spread to neighboring countries. In such a case, if the EU undertook action at the first stage of conflict, the autonomous European Union forces might turn out to be inadequate and in need of support from the Alliance. It is conceivable that EU operations carried out, for example, in the south of Europe (for instance, in Serbia or the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) might end in defeat, and that an adversary might threaten a non-EU European member of NATO (for instance, Bulgaria or Romania), not necessarily a country taking part in the operation. In this event, under Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, NATO involvement would become necessary. In other words, the unpredictability of conflict situations makes it prudent to base cooperation between the EU and NATO on clear and pragmatic rules.³⁷

The current Polish strategy of national security calls for Poland to participate in the strengthening of international peace, both regionally and globally, binding its security with that of the Euro-Atlantic area. The country has contributed forces to operations in the Balkans, Afghanistan, and Iraq. By maintaining positive relations with the United

³⁵ P. Zurawski, *ESDP: A View from Poland*, European Institute, Lodz University, November 2003, p. 10, www.fornet.info/documents/

³⁶ W. Bartoszewski, *op. cit.*

³⁷ O. Osica, *op. cit.*, s. 16.

States, Poland intends to influence EU and US policies while promoting the construction of a strategic partnership between the European Union and the United States.³⁸

³⁸ K. Miszczak, *The Role of Poland in Euro-Atlantic Relationships*, Przegląd Środkowo Europejski, November 2003.

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III. ESDP AND POLAND AS A CANDIDATE FOR MEMBERSHIP IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

A. POLISH POINTS OF VIEW

An analysis of Poland's policy towards ESDP as a candidate for membership in the EU can be reduced to the two central areas. The first area represents the current aspects of the establishment of the ESDP, including the implementation of the decisions following EU summits. The second area is focused on the discussion about the future of European integration, notably with regard to the EU's role in a global context.³⁹

The basis for consideration in the first area is provided by two documents generated by the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, namely "Intergovernmental Conference 2000 – the Polish Position" and "Treaty of Nice – the Polish Point of View." Although neither of these documents contributes much to solving the problems of the EU's security and defense policies, they undeniably reflect Polish thinking on the shape and future functioning of the EU's second pillar.

The document entitled "Intergovernmental Conference 2000 – the Polish Position" states that at the present stage of the EU's ESDP development no EU members support giving Poland any privileges with regard to the EU's second pillar. As the necessary resources for taking the relevant steps are found in the first pillar, which is at the disposal of the European Commission, the European Commission has great influence with reference to the development within the ESDP of the capabilities responsible for the civilian aspects of crisis management. Therefore, a key question is whether operations for civilian crisis management are considered only a support for military operations or a separate element of the EU's security policy. In the first case, the European Commission's composition and the potential majority vote system may become important to the future of the EU's ESDP and Poland's influence on this policy. The Polish Foreign Ministry's document on the 2000 Intergovernmental Conference also states that the codification of the Helsinki decisions concerning the establishment of the new bodies responsible for implementation of the ESDP should clearly define the prerogatives of

³⁹ O. Osica, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

these bodies and their relationship with already existing institutions -- for instance, the Committee of Permanent Representatives.⁴⁰

However, this document does not specify whether Poland advocates leaving the ESDP in the hands of the EU national governments or whether it supports in this area a certain role for the EU institutions -- for instance, the EU Parliament or the European Commission. Nor does this document define clearly the prerogatives of the new bodies responsible for the implementation of the EU's ESDP. Moreover, the document does not devote enough attention to the central problem of the overlapping functions of the High Representative for the CFSP and the External Relations Commissioner. Although the continuing rivalry between the politicians exercising these functions makes the problem sensitive, in point of fact the question is focused on the role of the EU Council and the EU Commission in the process of undertaking actions within the scope of the EU's ESDP.⁴¹

The document issued by the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs entitled "Treaty of Nice – the Polish Point of View" elaborates the position presented in the document for the EU Intergovernmental Conference in 2000. However, this text does not contain any new elements. Instead, it emphasizes once again the complementarities to NATO of the EU's ESDP and the need to base the ESDP on consultation and cooperation.

We hope that changes in the decision-making procedure will contribute to greater effectiveness in the CFSP. A more precise definition of the principles of making agreements should permit the signing of agreements aimed at the implementation of the CFSP, including an agreement on EU-NATO cooperation in crisis management. [...] The establishment of the Political and Security Committee and vesting it with significant prerogatives with regard to security policy and crisis management constitute an important change in the internal structure of the EU bodies as well as granting greater prerogatives to the EU. We believe that the taking over by the EU of the WEU tasks should involve a broader approach to security problems, based on participation and cooperation with all the

⁴⁰ Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Intergovernmental Conference 2000: the Polish Position*, Warszawa 2000, http://www.sprawymiedzynarodowe.pl/yearbook/2001/intergovernmental_conference_2000.html

⁴¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 26.

countries showing the will and potential to establish such cooperation. The EU's ESDP should be based on cooperation with NATO.⁴²

This document also stressed that "Poland's favorable attitude towards the development of the EU's ESDP goes together with the expectation that ESDP will be a realistic policy," which in turn means that "the EU will develop adequate military capabilities."⁴³

B. ENHANCED COOPERATION

Poland's position regarding enhanced cooperation with the EU's ESDP assumes that its initiation is feasible on condition that this cooperation serves as a method of European integration and that no group of countries establishes any new bodies. In addition, the mechanism of closer cooperation must not exclude new member states from some of the areas of the "politique communautaire."⁴⁴

To improve cohesion in the European Union, Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs Wladyslaw Bartoszewski argued that "we must bring the idea closer to the broad public by attempting to put it into practice in those spheres of European politics that are seen as priorities in the eyes of citizens. This could, for instance, be the sphere of internal security, especially elements such as migration policy, combating drugs and organized crime or police and judicial cooperation."⁴⁵

Simultaneously, in the document "Intergovernmental Conference 2000: the Polish Position" the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that "the proposal to formally extend closer cooperation to cover the second pillar should be approached with caution, it being a new area, undergoing very rapid change, where a range of important decisions have to be taken, including, for example, a stronger involvement of non-EU NATO

⁴² Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Traktat z Nicei – Polski Punkt Widzenia*, 15 February 2001, www.msz.gov.pl

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ L. Jesien, *Polska pozycja na Miedzyrządowej Konferencji 2000, Krytyczna Analiza*, Fundacja Konrada Adenauera w Polsce, Warszawa 2000, p. 43.

⁴⁵ W. Bartoszewski, *Odwaga europejskiego zjednoczenia*, O przyszłości Europy, Warszawa 2001, p. 31.

member states; it would be therefore advisable to postpone the debate on the issue until the principles of CESDP functioning are specified.”⁴⁶

This, in turn, could suggest that as long as enhanced cooperation does not apply to defense policy, the EU will not become a collective defense organization. In principle, this fact can be recognized as the most likely reason for Poland’s caution with regard to the creation of such an organization within the EU. Moreover, if it can be argued that the NATO – EU relationship exerts the strongest influence on Poland’s attitude towards the EU’s ESDP, which in the context of the above document seems to be justified, the reason why appears to be as follows: even if, following the postulates of the authors of the document “Intergovernmental Conference 2000,” the institutional framework of the second pillar were defined first and the role of the non-EU European members of NATO were explained next, any closer cooperation among EU members in defense policy would mean further distancing of this group of EU countries from the non-EU European members of NATO.⁴⁷

On the other hand, European members of the Alliance that are also members of the EU could pursue closer military cooperation which could lead to the creation within NATO of a powerful inner circle whose political importance and military contribution would balance that of the United States.⁴⁸

Is the strong Polish fear that enhanced cooperation in the second pillar could leave Poland outside the expected inner circle justified? It would be indeed justified, if the condition for participating in closer cooperation in defense policy were to be the fulfillment of, for instance, convergence criteria concerning the level of defense spending or the ratio between spending on research and on equipment for the armed forces. In this case, Poland might remain on the periphery for many years.⁴⁹ Such reasoning is not unjustified and is indicated by statements in the document entitled “Treaty of Nice – Polish point of view.” According to this document, “Steady development of enhanced

⁴⁶ Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Intergovernmental Conference 2000: the Polish Position*, *op. cit.*

⁴⁷ O. Osica, *op. cit.*, p.28.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Op. cit.*, p. 29.

cooperation that allows for spreading investments and organizational effort over a certain period of time is in the interest of Poland. It has to be remembered, however, that participation in certain endeavors may initially be impossible.”⁵⁰ However, as yet this is only a theoretical possibility; and even though many experts postulate implementation of the solution which, as in the case of economic and monetary union, would oblige the EU countries to develop their military capabilities, this is unlikely to take place in the near future.⁵¹ Therefore, considering Poland’s geopolitical position and its membership in NATO and the EU, it is difficult to envisage any exclusion of Poland from cooperation in the EU’s CFSP.

Irrespective of the motives for Poland’s position concerning the EU’s ESDP, the Nice summit decisions which limited enhanced cooperation in the CFSP to common actions and common stands, short of matters with military or defense implications, were received by Poland with satisfaction. Polish officials maintain that the part of the Treaty “referring to enhanced cooperation serves to allay fears voiced by the present and the future members of the European Union.”⁵²

Given the Polish position as a candidate for EU membership presented in the documents issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well as the sensitivity of the matter and the present stage of the discussion in Poland, where enhanced cooperation is seen as an attempt on the part of some EU countries to avoid interaction with new members, one can hardly expect the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to launch new initiatives in this respect.⁵³

However, the real opposition to closer cooperation regarding the EU’s ESDP, reinforced by the strongly held views of certain non-EU European members of NATO, makes Poland a politically unattractive partner in the implementation of this project because it demonstrates that Polish thinking is influenced by a desire to restrain the actions of others. Several countries, notably France, are using exactly this approach as an

⁵⁰ Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Traktat z Nicei – Polski Punkt Widzenia*, *op.cit.*

⁵¹ F. Heisbourg, *European Defence: Making It Work*, Chaillot Paper, ISS WEU2000, p. 93-101.

⁵² Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *op.cit.*

⁵³ P. Buras, *Publiczny brak zainteresowania*, *Tygodnik Powszechny*, 13/2001, p. 13.

argument for breaking away from the rest of the EU members and forming a vanguard of nations prepared to pursue more ambitious projects than the other EU members.⁵⁴

C. EUROPE: SUPERPOWER OR “STABILIZING FACTOR”

Another important question concerns the strategy behind Polish support for the EU's ESDP. The Cologne and Helsinki summits introduced the ESDP and established tests for further initiatives. Therefore, as an EU member Poland will participate in the discussion which will focus not only on the institutional shape of the second pillar and the European Rapid Reaction Forces but also on the political project to turn the EU into a world power.⁵⁵

In this sense the question about the European Union's ambitions regarding security and defense is actually about the Polish vision of the EU's future, its role in world politics and the meaning of the EU nations speaking and acting in unison.

Should the long term strategy of the EU members provide for the European Union's strong identity in world politics and, at the same time, make the EU a partner militarily equal to the United States, namely a partner capable of saying “no” and, if necessary, acting without or in defiance of Washington?

Or should the role of the EU regarding security policy be restricted to the creation of conditions to fill in the civilizational gaps between East and West and South and North, and to occasional military actions to settle conflicts and restore peace? In such situations, the aim of the EU's political strategy should be to create the conditions for further EU enlargement in order to embrace all those countries that feel themselves culturally connected with Europe and that are pursuing the necessary reforms. In this case the EU's ESDP would consist mainly of preventive measures and support for small scale humanitarian interventions as a kind of militarized emergency service.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ O. Osica, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Op. cit.*, p. 31.

Which of these two ideal types is Poland more likely to support? Although the widespread lack of interest and knowledge regarding integration in the EU's ESDP in EU nations rules out an unambiguous answer, today an EU that functions as a stabilizing factor seems to be more likely to gain Poland's support. The Polish politicians who have joined in the discussion on the future of Europe have emphasized, first and foremost, the EU's enlargement and the need to preserve its cohesion. Poland will support the process of creating a political union provided that these two conditions are fulfilled.

However, is there any room for the EU's global ambitions in the Polish vision of a political union? According to Jan Kulakowski, the head of the Poland-EU negotiations team, the European Union cannot leave the solution of crises to the United States alone. Therefore, the EU's ability to cope with security problems in Europe must be recognized as a minimum objective.⁵⁷ Polish Foreign Minister Wladyslaw Bartoszewski expressed a similar view in stronger terms:

Europe may become the "exporter of stability," promoting the European model of a democratic state of law, respect for fundamental rights and freedoms and the idea of a market economy based on the law of property and a dialogue between social partners. For the European Union to fulfill the function of being a stabilizing element in Europe and in the world of course requires strengthening the defense dimension of European integration. The European Union still cannot get rid of the label of an economic giant and political dwarf. The war in the Persian Gulf and the subsequent conflict in the former Yugoslavia fully demonstrated the weakness of the Europeans. The thrust of the provisions of the Treaty of Amsterdam and the decisions set out in the conclusions of the European Council in Cologne in June 1999 and in Helsinki in December the same year seem ambitious but realistic. The member states acknowledged then the leading role of the UN Security Council and the North Atlantic Alliance in the world and European security policy and simultaneously confirmed their aspirations for autonomous activities in the military sphere with the possible use of the assets and infrastructure of NATO. The success of this project would strengthen the concept of a European Security and Defense Policy. The ESDP, in the sense of a higher stage of the CFSP, should in itself create a certain integration impulse for the EU. It may also be important for internal politics because it will legitimize the European Union in the eyes of its own citizens. The same psychological

⁵⁷ J. Kulakowski, *Solidarnosc dla Europy*, O przyszlosci Europy, Warszawa 2001, p. 48.

mechanism plays a role in the case of the forces of the nation state, namely that a strong state must have effective armed forces.⁵⁸

In view of the EU's present weakness in international politics, the Polish standpoint is quite ambitious. At the same time the tendency to confine the nation's intellectual horizons to the current aspects of integration under the second pillar, numerous vague statements (for instance, "ability to cope with security problems in Europe must be recognized as a bare minimum," "a certain integration impulse"), and the belief that enhanced cooperation should concentrate mainly on internal policy do not allow one to call the European Security and Defense Policy a prospect particularly attractive to Poland.⁵⁹

Based on these observations it can be said that in the eyes of Poland, European integration is primarily a process that promotes increased security in Europe. The EU has been a stabilizing factor. The idea of the European Union as a great power or world power does not stimulate any special interest in Poland, at least not at the present stage of the discussion about the EU's ESDP.

The cautious Polish reaction to the decisions of the Helsinki summit regarding the development of the EU's ESDP seems partly due to Poland's disappointment with the date of its inclusion in the European Union. While the Polish expectations may have been unrealistic, it is a fact that the Helsinki summit decisions caused noticeable discontent. Warsaw was not only not given a date for its EU membership but also was formally put on the same footing as another group of candidate countries, which were to start negotiations with the EU several months after the conclusion of the EU Finnish Presidency in January 2000. This manner of dealing with enlargement, at a time when the EU was deciding on the foundations for the ESDP, led Poles to question the cogency of the rationale for the ESDP.⁶⁰ A well-known expert on Poland's security policy argued that "Europe is avoiding the enlargement by calling for another Maastricht, Amsterdam or Nice Treaty or finding for itself substitute topics such as Charters of Rights or the

⁵⁸ W. Bartoszewski, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

⁵⁹ O. Osica, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

European Security and Defense Policy wherein the pompous name masks the intention to develop rapid reaction forces.”⁶¹

Consequently, Poland’s attitude as a candidate for membership in the EU towards the EU’s ESDP was influenced by its deteriorating relations with the European Union. Warsaw’s weariness regarding the prolonged negotiations with the EU and at that time the absence of any definite date for EU membership was increased by its awareness that in comparison with the EU the Atlantic Alliance had risen to the occasion and had established a long-term program for its enlargement, including a number of criteria that had to be fulfilled by the candidates.⁶² NATO invited Poland (and Hungary and the Czech Republic) to join at the July 1997 Madrid summit, and the membership process was completed in March 1999.

⁶¹ R. Kuzniar, *Nadmiar wizji, brak konkretów*, Tygodnik Powszechny, 45/2001.

⁶² O. Osica, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

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IV. ELEMENTS AFFECTING PERCEPTIONS OF THE ESDP IN POLAND

At present, Polish politicians still have many concerns about security and defense in Europe. The uncertainties and doubts about the EU's ESDP result not only from the current international context. The background to the discussion about the EU's greater independence with regard to security and defense policy must be sought in the following questions: Why have some of the NATO member states decided to support the EU's ESDP? How will this step affect relations with the United States? What will be the Alliance's actual roles in Europe and beyond? And, in this situation, to what extent will the EU's ESDP improve or endanger the security of Poland?

A. LACK OF CONFIDENCE IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

The factor that has had the most important impact on Polish thinking about the EU's ESDP is the persisting disbelief in the European Union's ability and determination to fulfill its ambitions. Experiences in the Balkans in 1991 - 1999 confirmed Poland's belief that military security in Europe is the responsibility of the US-led Atlantic Alliance, while the EU is only capable of conducting simple, small-scale operations. In 1999 the Polish Minister of National Defense, Janusz Onyszkiewicz, argued that NATO, an organization in which the Americans play a decisive role and provide leadership, is the only guarantee for security in Europe because "once the US gets involved, the critical mass is achieved. No European country is capable of producing a comparable effect. All this means that not Europe but NATO with the US is an organization that is reasonably efficient and that can rapidly and effectively enough respond to the challenges of the 20th century and the next century."⁶³ The Polish minister of defense also stated that plans to develop a defense policy within the EU did not have favorable prospects because the European Union included a number of neutral countries whose commitments in this regard would not be clear. According to Janusz Onyszkiewicz, economic considerations argued for the pursuit of the European Union's ambitions within the NATO security framework, thereby avoiding duplication of the Alliance structures. In his view, the

⁶³ W. Beres, K. Burnetko, *Onyszkiewicz ze szczytów do NATO*, Warszawa 1999, p. 246.

European Union was unable to finance “either the infrastructure or the logistics permitting a swift long distance transfer of large forces. [...] There is only one conclusion: Europe’s greater activity must rest on NATO structures.”⁶⁴

In addition, it seems that the EU’s failures in Bosnia and Herzegovina did not surprise Poland but rather confirmed the lessons it drew from the 20th century: “The European would not like to die for Europe.”⁶⁵ In the countries of Western Europe, powerless against ethnic cleansing, the war in the former Yugoslavia produced a feeling of wounded pride caused by their overall dependence on US support. For Britain and France the war in Bosnia was not only a testimony to their own weakness but also a revelation of how unpredictable US policy could be.⁶⁶ Poland did not go through such an experience.

A similar episode took place during a discussion about the Kosovo war. For Poles this conflict reflected another manifestation of European weakness and dependence on American support. Warsaw accepted with understanding the fact that due to Poland’s lack of suitable military aircraft, Poland was not invited to take part in the air campaign in the Kosovo operations. However, in February 1999 the Polish Minister of Defense, Janusz Onyszkiewicz, declared that if there was a need, Polish Army units would take part in the Alliance’s operations. A week later, the ministry spokesmen announced that Poland could contribute a battalion to the SFOR rapid reaction reserve forces in Bosnia and that it was still not certain whether Polish soldiers would be included in a combat operation or only in the peace keeping mission. Three months later, when it was clear that air strikes on Serb positions were not producing the expected results, it was also generally known that Poland was not considering participation in a possible ground combat operation, but only in a peace keeping mission. Onyszkiewicz stated that if a ground force intervention was considered, Poland would participate in reaching such a decision; and this was a simple confirmation of the fact that Poland was a member of NATO.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ Z. Brzezinski, *Jak żyć z nową Europą*, Gazeta Wyborcza, 24-25 June 2000, p. 16.

⁶⁶ O. Osica, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

Although unable to contribute to the air combat operation in any significant way, Poland granted it its entire political support.⁶⁸ In this manner the “Kosovo syndrome,” which led EU governments to call for improvements in their military capabilities, did not affect Poland.

In the relevant statements by Polish diplomats and politicians as well as in media analyses in Poland of NATO’s intervention in the Kosovo conflict, the US military’s preponderant role in the operations in comparison with that of the European allies appeared as external phenomena that did not concern Poland. The mistakes by Washington that were criticized by Paris and London escaped Warsaw’s notice, while at the same time the shortcomings of the European allies’ equipment and capabilities were not recognized as a disadvantage for Poland. Moreover, certain countries’ unfavorable reaction to the U.S. conduct, which to some extent prepared the way for the EU decision to develop a common European Security and Defense Policy, until this day has met with a lack of understanding in Warsaw. In one of his speeches, Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs Wladyslaw Bartoszewski observed that “the course of the discussion on the EU’s ESDP indicates that the Europeans would like to exploit all the infrastructures, everything that can be learned from the US experience, and in exchange for this independently decide what to do using the American assets. I see something schizophrenic in it, because if Europe has for several years been unable to find a recipe for effective help to the people of the Balkans, and has only relied on this or another US intervention only to keep its distance and sometimes to criticize, then I see a certain hypocrisy in all this.”⁶⁹

Polish politicians not only do not share this hypocrisy but also undoubtedly believe that Poland has passed the Kosovo exam. As a new member of NATO much less was expected from Poland than from longstanding allies. In point of fact, the challenging ambition of the Polish government was to pledge political support for NATO’s Kosovo intervention in circumstances in which the reactions of both the public and the political

⁶⁸ B. Komorowski, R. Mroziewicz, *Europejska tozsamosc obronna*, Polska w Europie, Warszawa 2000, p. 21, <http://www.pwe.org.pl/konwer.php>

⁶⁹ W. Bartoszewski, *Sygnaly dnia*, Warszawa 2001, p. 12.

class were uncertain. On the other hand, it should be recalled that the European allies could not depend on any significant military contribution from Poland and that they had to fill the gap resulting from the Polish lack of suitable air combat capabilities at that time. Finally, unlike in some other countries, for instance Germany, the Kosovo war did not provoke in Poland any discussion about new types of threats or new requirements for the armed forces.⁷⁰

B. PERCEPTION OF INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

One of the recurrent questions concerning the EU's ESDP is the significance of the entire concept for the Alliance's future. In the eyes of foreign observers, the reaction of the Polish mass media and politicians to the modest plans to equip the EU with a military component was exaggerated. The indications that the EU's ESDP might collapse anyway, owing to major political differences, the EU's lack of an institutional culture comparable to that of NATO, and the continued low expenditures on military modernization, suggested that the Poles were excessively concerned.⁷¹

In order to understand this ambivalence, one should refer to another question, namely the Polish perception of Poland's external security requirements and the related role of NATO and, in point of fact, of the United States. Poles tend to believe that collective defense is the primary task of the Alliance, not operations in support of collective security outside the NATO area. During the Polish Parliament's debate on the nation's foreign policy in April 1999, Minister of Foreign Affairs Bronisław Geremek argued that "with regard to the reform of NATO doctrine being prepared for the Washington summit [...] our position is that we want NATO to keep its Article 5 in force, the force of the defense alliance that it has had for fifty years."⁷²

Although this principle is reflected in the strategy of NATO and Article 5 is still binding, its practical significance has decreased in situations in which international security is threatened by Balkan-type conflicts. However, large-scale terrorist attacks and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and delivery means to regional powers

⁷⁰ O. Osica, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

⁷¹ B. Komorowski, R. Mroziewicz, *op. cit.*, pp. 5-34.

⁷² B. Geremek, The statement given in the Polish Parliament on 8 April 1999.

have underscored the continuing relevance of Article 5. In view of Poland's unstable neighborhood and historical experience, Warsaw has unenthusiastically agreed to NATO's involvement in other activities and particularly its efforts to satisfy the needs of the EU. The point is not an objection to the peace-keeping missions to which Poland has contributed, but an apprehension that these missions could place demands on the Alliance at the expense of its other obligations. Polish Defense Minister Bronislaw Komorowski argued that "the European defense initiative will subtract from the already insufficient resources of NATO; it will develop outside NATO and will weaken the Alliance."⁷³ Moreover, this apprehension also derives from uncertainty as to whether the EU, which may someday achieve the capability goals that it established for itself in Helsinki, may go further and attempt to become also an organization responsible for the collective defense of its members.⁷⁴

To all these doubts can also be added the awareness of Poland's own military weakness, which does not allow it to face even a minor conflict in the east on its own. Therefore, Polish Defense Minister Bronislaw Komorowski argued that "as long as there is no European organization capable of mobilizing two heavy divisions that in an emergency would turn up on Polish territory – in the event of a threat [of aggression or coercion], not in the event of war – I believe Poland should show great restraint in reorienting its thinking about its own security and about the functioning of NATO towards a solely European [Union] track. And this is because the concept of European [Union] forces will for a long period of time undoubtedly compete with the present rules applying to NATO operations."⁷⁵

The European Union's European Security and Defense Policy is for the most part perceived in Poland as a military plan. However, the EU's ESDP is actually a manifestation of the European Union's Common Foreign and Security Policy, and its primary endeavor is not to organize an intervention army but to fulfill the political goals of the EU. The EU's CFSP and ESDP provide also for a strong civilian component,

⁷³ L. F. Kaplan, *Oziebienie w Trojkacie*, Gazeta Wyborcza, 27 April 2000, p. 9.

⁷⁴ S. Przymie, "Europejska tozsamosc bezpieczenstwa i obrony: mit czy rzeczywistosc?," *Sprawy Miedzynarodowe*, No. 2, 1999, p. 42.

⁷⁵ B. Komorowski, R. Mroziewicz, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

which will be responsible for the fulfillment of non-military tasks, for instance observation missions and the administration of regions devastated by civil wars. Therefore, disregarding this aspect of the discussion about the EU's ESDP, Polish politicians see no close relationship between these two components of the EU's second pillar, namely between the ESDP and the CFSP. On the other hand, considering the future of the EU, these two policies together will become the foundation for its strategy with reference to the states remaining outside the EU.⁷⁶

C. RUSSIAN AND FRENCH POLICIES

The distrust of the EU's emerging ESDP arises also from concerns about political consequences associated with the policies of Russia and France.

In the opinion of a high ranking official of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ryszard Mroziewicz, "implementation of this new establishment, namely ESDP, will naturally involve a change in the US presence in Europe. As the Helsinki records say that in keeping with the relevant agreements in the area of security and defense the European Union will cooperate with Russia and Ukraine, our misgivings are about whether this is not in some way synonymous to inviting Russia to participate in solving crises together with the EU and not necessarily with the approval of the ally from across the Atlantic."⁷⁷

The fear that Russia, encouraged by the EU policy standpoint, might use the ESDP plan to force a proverbial wedge between Europe and the United States, results also from the fact that the EU defense policy is subject to the authority of the United Nations Charter. Some Poles fear that this means that formally the EU is making its operations dependent on the Security Council's permission, which is not the case for the Alliance's operations.⁷⁸ This fear seems to be based on a misunderstanding. Both NATO and the EU maintain that their international security activities are based on the UN Charter, but neither NATO nor the EU has declared itself a "regional arrangement" in the sense of Chapter VIII of the UN Charter.

⁷⁶ O. Osica, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

⁷⁷ B. Komorowski, R. Mroziewicz, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

⁷⁸ O. Osica, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

Dmitriy Danilov and Stephan De Spiegeleire argued in 1998 that “the development of West European integration and transatlantic relations in the sphere of security seem to point in the direction of a marked strengthening and rapprochement of the relevant West European institutions (WEU and EU's CFSP) and consequently of increased European roles and responsibilities. These developments would be perceived quite positively in Russia, as they could translate into an institutional embodiment of a West European component of NATO and its transformation into a new Euro-Atlantic Alliance, which in turn may give Russia added incentives and instruments for cooperation with it.”⁷⁹

Does the EU realize why Russia has received the ESDP so warmly? Is the EU ready to establish closer cooperation with Russia than is necessary?

Although the EU has established various cooperation agreements with Russia, it has no intention of including Russia in ESDP decision-making. The enhanced dialogue and cooperation with Russia do not justify an observation that the EU might in any way prefer Moscow to Washington. Given that at least some EU political leaders are aware of the reason why the Kremlin supports the idea of the ESDP, Russia can hardly expect to gain anything more than invitations to cooperate in specific and carefully defined activities. Because the EU intends to cooperate with NATO, it is difficult to imagine that the European Union might offer Moscow anything in the international security field beyond the issues considered by the NATO-Russia Council. Any excessive concession to Russia could lead to a negative reaction from some NATO members and, therefore, make it more difficult for the EU to enjoy access to NATO assets.⁸⁰

This, however, does not change the fact that if some EU members wanted to decide on a dialogue with Russia regarding cooperation within the ESDP framework without listening to the opinions of other EU members, including Poland, the EU would

⁷⁹ Dmitriy Danilov and Stephan De Spiegeleire, *From Decoupling to Recoupling: Russia and Western Europe: a New Security Relationship* (Paris: Institute for Security Studies, Western European Union, April 1998), Chaillot Paper No. 31, <http://www.iss-eu.org/>

⁸⁰ O. Osica, *op. cit.*

risk a conflict that could have a permanent and adverse effect on the ESDP and, in particular, on Poland's position regarding this policy.⁸¹

In the discussions on the EU's ESDP in Poland it has been uncommon for Poles to raise the argument that the EU's autonomous operations, even those fulfilled using NATO assets, would not produce as much Russian resistance as possible NATO operations. As the tragedy of the *Kursk* submarine in August 2000 revealed, for Moscow the Alliance can sometimes represent a bigger problem with regard to political rivalry and the hostile picture drawn for domestic purposes than is justified on objective grounds. Therefore, by relying in some circumstances on the EU's ESDP instead of NATO, Poland might gain another useful instrument for its eastern policy; namely, Poland and its EU partners might in some cases effectively prevent crises without annoying Russia unnecessarily.⁸²

The problem regarding France's role in the shaping of the EU's ESDP constitutes a peculiar aspect of the Polish discussion. Polish politicians and diplomats seem to believe that "there is only one thing worse than a European conspiracy: a French-inspired European conspiracy."⁸³ Therefore, Poland suspects that France's designs greatly exceed its declared intentions and that its ultimate goal is to achieve the Gaullist vision of making the EU a partner equal to and independent of NATO by weakening US political influence in Europe. These suspicions arise not only from interpretations of history but also from the EU's consultations with NATO; in these consultations France has acted as the guardian of the European Union's independence.⁸⁴

Although French diplomatic conduct regarding the EU's ESDP has encountered criticism from many European politicians and NATO diplomats, Polish reactions have often been provoked by the rhetoric of French politicians whose language is by no means

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ Speech given by Ambassador François Bujon de l'Estang at the CSIS conference, *ESDP and its implications for the United States and NATO*, October 2000, <http://csis.org/europe/sp00bujon.html>

⁸⁴ O. Osica, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

characteristic of all EU members. Therefore, Polish opposition to France's apparent intentions translates into opposition to the entire concept of the EU's ESDP.⁸⁵

The mistrust of France's intentions seems to represent one of the greatest factors preventing Poland from seeing in the EU's ESDP an opportunity for its policy. Characteristic in this respect is the opinion of Jerzy Jastrzebowski, a Polish expert in international relations, who has argued that "For Poland the future of the uniting Europe is too important an issue to leave to confrontational Europeans alone, especially the French who are particularly irritable with regard to economic and cultural leadership in Europe. [...] For Poland the lasting presence of the US in Europe is at least as important as the attempts to minimize American influence in Europe are to some French politicians."⁸⁶

However, without France's willingness to recognize the reasons for Polish reservations, even if from a French perspective they seem to be inexplicable and influenced by the United States, the EU's ESDP might not promote substantive Polish-French cooperation either in the forum of the Weimar Triangle (Berlin, Paris and Warsaw) or in the forum of the European Union.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ J. Jastrzebowski, *Plus – Minus Interview*, 4 November 2000, <http://www.tvp.pl/plusminus/>

⁸⁷ O. Osica, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

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V. CONCLUSIONS

This analysis of the main elements of Poland's official position towards the EU's ESDP suggests the factors that have influenced this position.

Poland has been concerned, first and foremost, by the clash of different perspectives and political rivalry between the European Union and the Atlantic Alliance. As a member of both NATO and the EU, Poland has naturally been a party to all the political disagreements. The consequences of these disagreements concern Poland and the other member states of NATO and the EU. Therefore, the postulates of Polish diplomacy -- the demand for consultations regarding relations between the EU and NATO and recognition of the exceptional status of the six non-EU European members of NATO -- were considered as nothing extraordinary and were placed in the general framework of discussions among the NATO allies.

On the other hand, Warsaw has been one of the capitals most opposed to the obstacles created by the EU's policy towards the Alliance. This touchiness is explicable in light of what membership in NATO means to Poland in its national historical context, and how sensitive Polish policy is to changes in the international security environment. In this sense, concerns about the EU's ESDP, particularly following the Kosovo war, were considered a test for Poland to handle in conjunction with other conflicts within the Alliance.

Another factor that has had a strong impact on Poland's policy concerning the EU's ESDP has been the lack of clarity with regard to the real motives behind the policy line adopted by the European Union member states. This factor has two dimensions.

The first dimension is related to the character of the ongoing processes, because their results and consequences are not predictable. In this regard, although the wording of the relevant EU documents and speeches leaves no doubt that the EU's ESDP is a project complementary to NATO and intended to reinforce the transatlantic ties, it is not clear where this process might lead the EU member nations and the NATO allies in the long run.

The second dimension represents an effect of misunderstanding concerning the EU's intentions, which has been reinforced by insufficient knowledge with regard to current changes in Euro-Atlantic security arrangements. Therefore, Polish perceptions of the EU's ESDP as a political adventure have been driven by the overstated ambitions of some European Union countries, first of all France. This is the explanation of Polish restraint concerning arguments acknowledging the beneficial influence of the EU's ESDP on improvements in the Alliance's military capabilities as well as on the integration of European Union defense industries and the reform of the armed forces of European Union member nations. Moreover, it has been difficult to identify any advantages the European Union's security and defense policy might offer to Poland in the future.

These two elements, concerns about the Alliance's determination and doubts about the EU's policy, gave not only dynamism but also a unique character to Polish discussions about the ESDP. These quarrels have inevitably been reflected in the Polish position towards the EU's ESDP. Poland's sensitivity to security questions has been reinforced by its disappointment with the EU policy regarding the enlargement process.

Yet a third factor must be noted. Polish policy had for a long time been uncertain about what steps might reinforce the importance of NATO and about whether to regard the EU's ESDP as an element in the EU's political integration. Although officially Warsaw declared that the European Union's security and defense policy was a realistic project and that the failure of that project was neither in the interest of Europe nor in the interest of Poland, it was unsuccessful in winning practical support for this opinion in Polish society.⁸⁸ In other words, Poland's status as an applicant country for EU membership did not prevent Poles from expressing their views candidly.

Although these three factors did not fundamentally change the way in which Poland's attitude towards the EU's ESDP was perceived, Polish policy-makers considered them with interest. These factors showed some of the thinking behind Warsaw's misgivings. Undoubtedly, these uncertainties were related to Poland's interests and did not constitute an effort to block the EU activities. This, however, does not change the fact that there still have not been enough Polish initiatives to convince the other EU

member states about Poland's pro-European course with regard to security and defense matters. In his speech at Warsaw University in May 2001 the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs observed that "It is justified to ask about Poland's stance on the EU's ambitious endeavor of the ESDP. This is not only because our position regarding this matter remains unknown, but, first and foremost, because on the basis of the discussion taking place [in Poland] among experts and in press articles concerning this subject, one might get a wrong impression, namely that Poland holds itself distant from -- or has some reservations about -- the EU's ESDP."⁸⁹

However, the relevant Polish position has undergone substantial modifications visible in the balance between NATO and the EU in Warsaw's statements and actions as well as in the reduction of the fear that Poland's support for the ESDP might undermine its relations with the United States. This is a result of the gradual clarification of issues such as the participation of non-EU European members of NATO in the decision-shaping process within the ESDP framework and also a general change of attitude in Poland towards the discussions taking place within the European Union.

In the Polish position towards the EU's ESDP the ambition to have a voice in this policy-shaping process and its further development was and still is in conflict with the limited military capabilities that Poland can offer to the EU. Poland's postulates concerning the acknowledgement by the EU of the special role of the six non-EU European members of NATO were based on its membership in NATO and its associate membership in the Western European Union. However, as Polish politicians have repeatedly argued, the development of the ESDP should concentrate on honoring national capabilities commitments and not on institutional disputes.

Although the Polish Defense Minister, Bronislaw Komorowski, offered a framework brigade at the EU Capabilities Commitment Conference in May 2001, he did not specify the exact number of troops, arguing that Poland wanted to be free to raise this number.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ H. Szlajfer, *op. cit.* p. 39.

⁸⁹ W. Bartoszewski, *op. cit.*

⁹⁰ O. Osica, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

At the same time Komorowski did not conceal the fact that increasing Poland's commitment would be difficult.

There are the constant questions whether we have not undertaken a number of commitments and obligations to NATO too quickly. The Polish inclination to make offers without counting the money first makes the situation difficult. This makes it necessary to reallocate resources in the defense budget and to concentrate them on the NATO goals. It is impossible to develop or bear the expense of two processes at the same time. Poland is bound by its duty to make a great financial effort on behalf of the goals agreed with the Alliance. This is a great strain and I do not believe that we can engage in anything else at the same time. I do not believe that it is possible to take advantage of the programs which result from our integration with NATO, and to participate in the European [Union's] armed forces. Not all the programs that are crucial from the point of view of our participation in the European [Union's] armed forces can be used in order to meet our obligations arising from our membership in NATO.⁹¹

A. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Poland is currently better equipped to contribute to the non-military dimension of the EU's ESDP than to the military combat dimension. The non-military dimension not only encompasses the most likely future EU operations but is also considered a domain in which the EU will have to seek support. For the time being, it is less expensive for Poland to contribute to the civilian policy component than to train and equip additional mobile and interoperable armed troops.

Will Poland's membership in the EU, which will enable it to participate fully in EU institutions, make Warsaw an ESDP enthusiast? Do the EU's current crisis management capabilities make Poles feel more secure? Is Poland interested in actively supporting the development of the EU's ESDP? Is the only goal of Polish policy to maintain that the EU should not move too far away from NATO?

The current status of the discussion suggests the following answer. The concept of using the military dimension of the EU to strengthen Poland's security does not evoke much interest because the country's geopolitical situation at NATO's easternmost border obliges Polish policy-makers as well as the armed forces to think mainly about defense,

⁹¹ B. Komorowski, R. Mroziewicz, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

and not about crisis management outside the NATO area. Poles continue to perceive the EU's ESDP as a policy competing with that of NATO, both politically and militarily. Because the EU's ESDP does not seem to offer an answer to Polish security requirements and support for it is a matter of political necessity rather than choice, Poles do not have much confidence in its success and are by no means full of enthusiasm for it. A clear majority of Polish politicians believe that if European nations had really wanted to make a breakthrough, they could have done so by making use of existing organizations and mechanisms, particularly those of NATO and the Western European Union.

Could Poland's membership in the EU contribute to a major breakthrough in ESDP development? It could do so, but Poland would have to change its perception of security requirements and give more attention to non-military challenges. This would depend on the course of events in the East, primarily in Russia and Belarus. Democracy and constructive international security policies in these countries constitute the primary conditions that would allow Poland to dispense with the fear of participating in projects that might cause tensions in its relations with NATO and the United States in particular. Only in such circumstances would Poland be able to think differently about the role of the armed forces and pay more attention to crisis management outside the NATO area.

Moreover, from the Polish perspective, European integration is not perceived as a political process aimed at turning the EU into a military power. However, Polish views in this regard may change, depending on the nation's experience as a member of the European Union.

With Poland's admission to the EU in May 2004, Warsaw will have an opportunity to contribute to ESDP formation and implementation. However, Poland will probably remain committed to maintaining NATO's primacy and cautious regarding concepts of transforming the EU into an autonomous military power, especially with respect to collective defense.

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